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SEVEN POEMS

By

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THE GATES OF DEATH

Ye dreaded ports that mock us through our fears,
Behind whose sombre leaves the Unknown lies,
I smile at you and, turning, face those years
That steeped with light and shade like dim ghosts rise.
The joys and griefs of childhood once more thrill,
And as their echoes fade and pass I taste
The full, strong draught of Life whose essence, Will,
Bade me fight on 'gainst Self and all that cloys.
Zest of battle, knowledge of something done,
Pain of loss and sorrow of dying hopes,
Voices of children, touch of tiny hands,
Long years with one beyond expression dear,
These fill my eyes with happy tears that blind
Visions of terror—and I fear you not.

Oct. 30, 1911.

TO MY WIFE

Dear heart, as quiet evening shadows fall,
My thoughts from troubling cease, and mem'ries ris
Flooding my soul with light, and at their call,
Yearning, my lonely spirit homeward flies.
Visions there come of lovers' days and hours,
Fragrant with bliss new-found, when the deep thrill
Of lip to lip and fingers twined waked powers
All dormant when the pulse moved slow and still.
And yet that time surcharged with joy is naught
To fuller knowledge won through passing years
As side by side with growing trust we fought
The narrow aims of self whose fruit is tears,
And learned the stern great truth that Love to grow
Must feed on joys that out of serving flow.

Nov. 16, 1911.

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Ye whose sole worship is kneeling
And murm'ring of forms that are dead,
Whose faith in darkness is reeling,
Who falter where braver ones led:

With grief must you see 'round you fall
Beliefs that were started of eld,
No more with firm hope can ye call
On creeds which your forefathers held.

As dust unto dust returneth,
So doomed are those symbols of clay,
No longer in them sojourneth
The spirit man frightened away.

Life passing on through each being
As parent gives place to the child,
That is the soul once thought fleeing
From flesh where a moment it whiled.

Always, unconquered, within you
Eternal there liveth the Light,
And Truth, that ever shall aid you
Though shrouded and dim to our sight.

Sorrow and pain and the weeping
Of eyes we would free from all tears,
The death of hopes we were keeping
To stifle our doubts and our fears,

These be the steps leading upward,
As out of the slough and the mire
We bravely fight our way homeward
To peace and the goal of desire.

Nov. 17, 1911.

THE MAN OF SORROWS

Ye foolish ones, who, struggling, fight and turn
Occasions to those selfish ends that cheat
Your fondest hopes, and toiling seek to earn
The vain rewards which gained, but mark defeat;
Ye clever ones, who garner in with pride
A goodly store of knowledge heaped on high
And boasting from that vantage ground deride
All claims of spirit and the soul deny;
Mayhap before the night comes on ye'll see
Athwart the face of Time the light still shed
From one pure life and trembling know how He
Of humble birth and lowly mien hath led
The weary, heavy-laden'd sons of men
To that sure peace 'till now beyond your ken.

Dec. 4, 1911.

L'ENVOI

If Fate hath willed that we shall meet no more,
If down the vista of the coming years
Which stretch through twilight on to Lethe's shore
I gaze with longing, and some vague dim fears
Give subtle warning that the future days
May ne'er be flooded with that light divine
Which shining once makes now a leaden haze
Like sunset at a stormy day's decline;
Why then, dear love, despite it all I give
Unending thanks for those few hours most fair
Which taught me what you were and bade me live
For one brief space in bliss so wondrous rare
That fairy idylls seem but rude, cheap dross
Whose clumsy purpose is to point my loss.

March 20, 1912.

IN MEMORIAM

Because awak'ning brings no thrill at dawn,
Because the long grim horror called the night
Is ever peopled by a grisly spawn
Of fond and foolish hopes whose sudden blight
Made cruel mock of all I held most dear:
Because of this, and all the untold woe
That lamed and halting speech cannot make clear,
I cringe at reaping now what joy did sow.
And yet, ah God, this mighty sum of pain
Whose fearsome shadow blackens each day's sun
Is but the petty measure of the gain
Which my life drew from those long years with one
Unto this heart so dear that human love
Must own some source this poor cold earth above.

Aug. 15, 1912

INVOCATION TO LOVE

Thou lambent flame, whose quick'ning touch doth stir
The spirit slumb'ring in our mortal clay;
Eternal Essence of all things divine
That lifts us from our lower selves on high
Until the sound of angel's wings beats low
Upon that inner ear all new attuned
To music of the Ages crashing down
In solemn splendor through the aisles of Time:—

Those dear, sweet scenes that youth and maiden paint
Upon the canvas broad that fancy spreads,
Those pictures fair that gild the humblest hopes
And make such utter mock of Time and Space,
Are but the wanton magic of thy spell
As faint at first unto the human heart
Thy dawning rays on the horizon dim
Foretell the coming of the perfect day.

Thy noontide fire doth dazzle with its light
The eyes that prying seek to clearly read
The mystic secret of each new young life,
Or which, o'er daring, fain would force their gaze
Into the sacred shrine of Mother-love
Where all immortal dwells the very soul
Of all that hath been or that yet may be.

And in the evening glow of sunset days
Shed o'er the ancient path that little feet
With tripping steps have worn into our hearts,
We see the ling'ring ghosts of good deeds past
Wending their quiet way to join the throng
That through the aeons yet to come shall bear
The grateful tributes to thy conquering might.

Dec. 1, 1912.

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